

R 291419Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0273
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
CDR USEUCOM ALT SHAPE BE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000735

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2023
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN HOSTAGE SITUATION

REF: STATE 53330

Classified By: Econ/Pol Counselor Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Johann Sattler, Political Affairs Advisor to Austrian MFA Secretary General Kyrle, reported May 29 that the Ministry saw no certain early prospect for the release of the two Austrian citizens held by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) since February 2008. Sattler said ongoing negotiations had appeared to be on the verge of success at several points, but that all agreements had collapsed. Sattler did not discuss what terms these agreements might have included. Sattler's analysis was that the hostage takers represented several different groups, with diverging views and interests, and have therefore been unable to agree on terms for a release. However, though nothing was definitely in view, Sattler thought the nature of the hostage takers meant that a release could come with unexpected suddenness.

12. (C) Econ/Pol Counselor raised the points in reftel, noting that a release agreement would have an impact not just on Austria, but on the security of all western persons as well. Sattler agreed, and said the GoA recognizes the legitimacy of these concerns. He indicated, however, that Austria also had a national perspective on the issue and domestic political concerns to factor into its decision making.

Kilner